

At a Ways and Means Health Subcommittee hearing on Medicare reform proposals today, Rep. Stark announced the introduction of legislation to modernize Medicare and extend the life of the Trust Fund without raising premiums on seniors who choose to stay in fee-for-service Medicare.

“The Medicare Modernization and Solvency Act of 2001 is basically the Clinton Administration proposal from June 1999, greatly strengthened to achieve major savings and more programmatic improvements,” said Rep. Stark. “I felt it was important to introduce it today as the Subcommittee begins a series of hearings on Medicare reform so as to make very clear that the Breaux/Frist premium support proposal is not the only Medicare reform proposal in town. It is my hope that, as we consider reforms this year, this proposal, or portions of it, can be discussed and potentially included,” continued Stark.

“The bill makes needed improvements to the current Medicare benefits package including adding prescription drugs and additional preventive benefits. It simultaneously saves money in the long-run because it addresses all three avenues necessary for preserving Medicare: changes to beneficiary cost-sharing, modifications to provider payments, and increasing tax revenues for the program,” said Stark.

“There are many tough choices that have to be made as we confront the arrival of the baby boom generation into Medicare. We must be willing to make these tough choices, but the solutions must protect Medicare’s ability to continue providing an entitlement to quality health care. The bill I am introducing today meets that standard. It is a very ambitious bill that would generate enormous long-term savings, while also making sure that Medicare truly meets the health needs of America’s elderly and disabled citizens,” concluded Rep. Stark.